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February CensusAtSchool Newsletter - Edition No. 24



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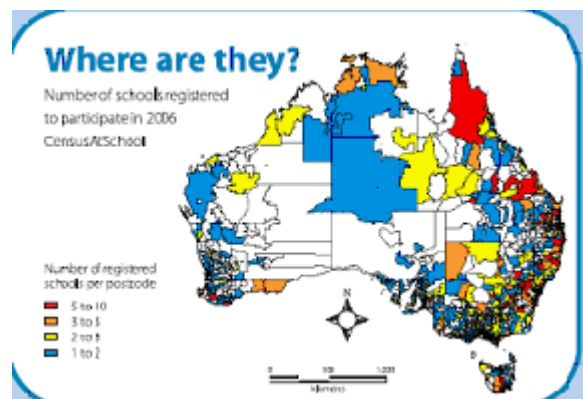
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The 2008 Questionnaire Has Arrived...Let The Data Begin!

The Questionnaire Phase of CensusAtSchool 2008 officially commenced on the 29th of January, and already over 250 new schools have registered to participate. This is the first phase of the project, during which time students can get online and submit their responses for inclusion into the Australian-wide database. In 2006 over 2,650 schools embraced the project when it launched into Australian education sector for the first time.



Director of Education Services, Mr Paul Taylor, couldn't be more pleased about the positive response, noting "it is about making statistics interesting and relevant to students, by engaging them in data they are themselves a part of. The encouraging response from the 2006 CensusAtSchool indicates the project has been successful in accomplishing this".

The CensusAtSchool questionnaire brings many new initiatives in 2008. For the first time the questionnaire will include a set of international common questions. These will be included in the questionnaires of participating countries, namely the UK, Canada and New Zealand, and are denoted by an identifiable symbol. "For the first time, Australian students will be able to compare their results with participating countries. This will expand CensusAtSchool into a truly international project and provide a multitude of new analysis possibilities for students", says Paul Taylor, Director of ABS Education Services. For more information on what's new in 2008, please see the 'What To Expect in 2008 article' below.

Currently over 30% of schools are registered to participate in the 2008 CensusAtSchool. If you're not part of the data in 2008, you'll have to wait at least two years for the next Questionnaire Phase so don't let your school miss out - register now!

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What To Expect in 2008

Hot Topics

The CensusAtSchool questionnaire has many exciting twists in store for 2008. After much deliberation and feedback reports from teachers and students, the questionnaire includes several new additions whilst still keeping all the old favourites. As with the previous questionnaire, students answer questions on a range of topics covering the environment, use of technology, leisure activities and eating habits. The popular reaction time games are still there, as is the concentration game. Of course CensusAtSchool still boasts its cross-curricular applicability and meets today's curriculum requirements and modern teaching practices.



What's New?

The biggest change you will see in 2008 will be the set of international common questions, allowing Australian students to compare their data with the international community hence providing a multitude of fresh analysis possibilities. The student opinion questions have been expanded to cover a range of social and environmental issues such as climate change, water use, bullying and more depth into use of technology. Entirely new additions include questions on financial literacy, health and well-being, and hours of sleep. How many students are engaged in employment? How many hours do students spend on social networking sites? How

many hours of sleep are Australian students getting? What actions are students taking to conserve water? How frequently are students going overseas? The list for potential enquiry is endless.

Activities based on the 2008 CensusAtSchool data will be available after July 2008, but in the mean-time classroom activities will be updated periodically throughout the year using 2006 data. Another exciting analysis prospect is the opportunity for comparisons between the 2006 and 2008 data, introducing a time series element to analysis possibilities. Have attitudes to the environment changed? Are there any distinct trend changes in music tastes between the years? How has students use of technology changed since 2006?

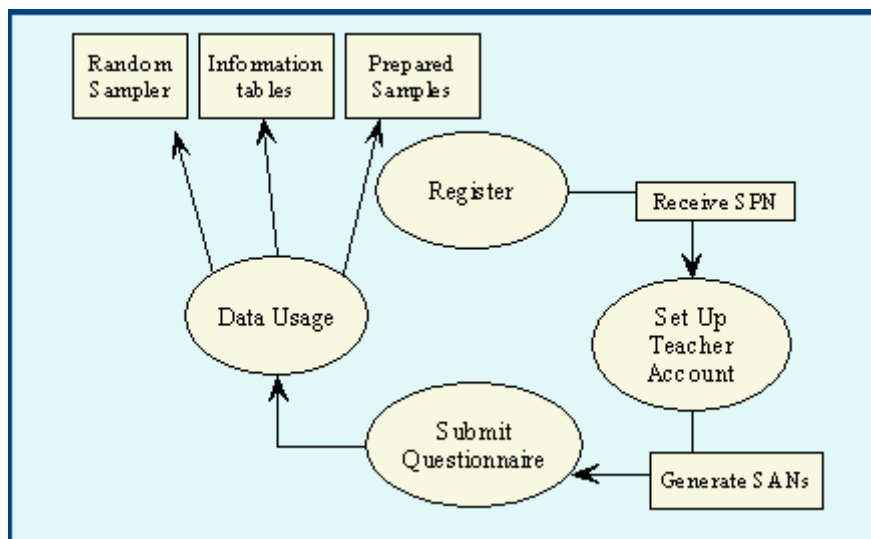
The sky's the limit with CensusAtSchool!

Check out the website for a variety of lesson plans on HSIE/SOSE, Mathematics and Economics studies, most are cross curricula. Access the random sampler to generate samples using the 2006 data - there are over 112,000 responses available from the Australian-wide database. Best of all - your students get access to data that is real, raw and relevant...and it's FREE!

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So You've Registered? What To Do Next...

Have you registered your school but are unsure about what to do next? Read on to find out all you need to know in four easy steps.



1. Register School

Information Packs were sent to all Australian schools in late 2007, encompassing a registration form for non-registered CensusAtSchool schools. If your school has not received a pack, you can access a form on the CensusAtSchool website or send an enquiry to censusatschool@abs.gov.au.

Complete the registration form and send or fax it back to the CensusAtSchool team. After sending the registration form, expect an Introduction Pack shortly that will contain your School Participation Number (SPN). Your SPN is required when setting up a teacher account.

2. Set Up a Teacher Account

After your school has received a SPN, you are ready to set up a CensusAtSchool Teacher Account. Whilst setting up your Teacher Account, you will be asked to record the number of students that are expected to complete a questionnaire so that you may be issued with a list of Student Access Numbers (SANs). A SAN is a randomly generated eight digit alphanumeric that can only be used once to submit a completed questionnaire, therefore each student will require their own SAN. More SAN's can be generated upon your request through your Teacher Account, and can be printed at your request.

Teacher **Darren McGreggor** suggests distributing the SANs in lots of 30 to each class that was involved on the first day: "I copied these SAN's from the ABS website to a MS Word document and then gave these to the teachers. Some teachers decided to cut the sheet into 30 strips and distribute them to the students, while others went around and gave it to students individually and crossed them off as they went."

3. Submit Questionnaire (aka Questionnaire Phase)

The CensusAtSchool Questionnaire Phase officially began on the 29th of January, and will remain open for students' responses until early July 2008. This is the first phase of the project and students will need to submit the online questionnaire during this time to be part of the 2008 Australia-wide database. Each student will need an individual SAN (see above) to access the questionnaire, which takes approximately 25-30 minutes to complete.

Please note the third section of the questionnaire poses four measurement questions requiring students to record their height, foot length, arm span and the height of their belly button above the floor. Take these measurements *prior* to starting the questionnaire to avoid interrupting the timed session. Allocate 10-15 minutes for recording measurements or set the measurements for homework, as advised by **D'Arcy Jones and Simon Mueller**: "To make the task of gathering the information easier we printed a copy of the questionnaire and

students were given some of the measuring tasks as homework assignments.”

For more tips about what you can do prior to accessing the live questionnaire, visit Carrying Out the Questionnaire on the CensusAtSchool website.

4. Data Usage Phase

This marks the second, and final, phase of the project. At this stage you are able to access the response data via the Random Sampler to use for investigation and analysis. Data will also be accessible in the form of Prepared Samples and Information Tables, which are ready to go for use in classroom activities! This is the time to let your imagination run wild....! You can go to the web site and look at 2006 data now from the Homepage

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Living In The Information Age



The recently released Adult Life and Literacy Survey, Australia 2006 (cat.no. 4228.0) showed that 25% of respondents claimed feeling anxious when working out amounts, and 30% said they did not enjoy learning maths at school. On the bright side, 61% of respondents claimed to have enjoyed learning maths at school, whilst 76% confirmed they usually understood maths at school. The publication explores knowledge and skills of 15 to 74 year olds in various literacy categories such as prose literacy, document literacy and numeracy.

The survey results also indicated that males felt more confident with numbers and calculations than females: 90% of males either agreed or strongly agreed they were good with numbers and calculations, as opposed to 80% of females. This survey underlines the relevance of numerical literacy in our work and daily life, but also of our information-processing ability. We are bombarded with information every day, and consequently information has never been as easily and readily available. An inability to effectively process information may prove stressful and impede informed decision-making, not only in the work environment but also in our personal life. This emphasises the importance of a solid foundation in analysis and information processing skills, whether it be numerical or alphabetical.

Although CensusAtSchool aims to improve statistical literacy, the scope of learning possibilities reaches far beyond mathematics. It provides students with a unique opportunity to use real, raw data to make sense of the world around them and to see where they fit. It creates awareness of lifestyles unique to their own, both Australian and international, and allows them to investigate any differences which may exist. It also builds and strengthens ICT skills that are invaluable in a technologically pertinent, information-based society. But most of all, CensusAtSchool engages students and makes data interesting, paving the way for student-led investigations! Every teacher's dream isn't it?

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It's Not Too Late to Register!

If your school has not yet registered for CensusAtSchool 2008, and you would like to be eligible to participate - it is not too late! The Questionnaire Phase is open between 29th of January until 7th of July 2008, which gives your class over 5 months to complete the questionnaire online. But you must be registered if you would like your students to be part of the data. A registration form can be downloaded from the Project Support Materials page or send an enquiry to the CensusAtSchool team.



If your school registered in 2006 simply use the same SPN and generate new Teacher

Accounts. If you can't remember your SPN send an enquiry to censusatschool@abs.gov.au.

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If you have any questions or general CensusAtSchool project enquiries, please contact ABS Education Services, CensusAtSchool Team by email censusatschool@abs.gov.au or on free call 1800 623 273 between 9:00am and 5:00pm (AEST) Monday to Friday.



About this Release

The CensusAtSchool newsletter is a service for users of the CensusAtSchool online learning project. It provides useful support information, project updates and community feedback on how the project is being used by teachers and students in schools across Australia. Each issue contains a feature article, a teacher support article and a general interest article, along with project updates, teacher tips and tricks and other related material. For more information on the CensusAtSchool project, visit <https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/cashome.nsf/Home/Home>

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